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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

18 March 1954

MEMORANDUM FOR THE BOARD

SUBJECT: The National Intelligence Digest

The purpose of this memo is to ask the Board's opinion on certain basic questions concerning the Digest. A copy of the Digest is in the Reading Room. Additional copies may be obtained from Room 112.

Background

1. In January 1954, it was decided to issue monthly revisions of the Digest. Because there had been no revision for seven months, it was necessary to revise approximately 90 percent of its 130-odd pages. This was largely accomplished in the 1 February and 1 March revisions. Now only a dozen or so of the less important sections still have the July 1953 date. These will be taken care of in the April revision, along with any other sections which may become out-dated.

2. Several changes and additions are contemplated over the next few months:

a. The chapter now entitled "World Situation" will be changed to "General". It will then include such general estimates as "The World Situation", the Atomic Plenty estimate, "Consequences of a Relaxation of Non-Communist...Trade...", etc. Some of these will be in summary form.

b. The number of maps and charts will be increased. It will be the usual procedure to include copies of maps prepared for NIE's. Photographs are a possibility.

3. As a guide for the preparation of material for the Digest "General Directions for Contributors to the National Intelligence Digest" was circulated among the staff of ONE and OCI. A copy of this is attached.

*Final
clippings*

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Problems for Discussion

4. In the hurly burly of the last two revisions, there was no opportunity to give much thought to scope, emphasis, and format. Now that we have a breathing space, attention should be given to these basic problems. We have listed below for the Board's consideration, two questions, the purpose of which is to ascertain whether the Digest is accomplishing its mission as outlined in the Introduction (to the Digest) and in the attached memo. The questions are:

a. At present we have two general types of presentation in the "country" sections. Section VI-H, Berlin, and VI-L, Trieste are examples of current factual reporting, with little analysis. On the other hand IV-A, India, and VI-F, France, while they contain a good deal of factual data, are analytical pieces which discuss the basic problems of the area. Which presentation best fulfills the requirements of the Digest?

b. We also use two types of breakdown for the country sections. In one we have four sub-heads: Political, Economic, Military, and Estimate of Probable Developments; in the other, the estimative portions appear under the Political, Economic, and Military sub-heads. Section VI-K, Italy, and II-E, The Satellites, are examples of the two types. Which do you prefer?

5. It should be pointed out that if we adopt either the India or the Satellite type of presentation, or a combination of the two, a good deal of extra work will fall on the ONE staff, at least initially. It follows, however, that if the sections are written in the "Indian" style, they will not require as frequent revision as a "Berliner" would.

Attachment



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OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

1 March 1954

General Directions for Contributors to the National Intelligence Digest

1. The following general directions are provided for those contributing to the Digest.

Scope

2. A section of the Digest should serve roughly the same purpose as the intelligence paragraphs of the General Considerations section of an NSC Policy Paper. To put it in other terms; if the DD/I were called on at an NSC Planning Board meeting to make a general statement on a country, the Digest should certainly provide him with sufficient basic, current, and estimative material. Incidentally, the DCI has used the Digest on numerous occasions when briefing consultant groups, etc.

3. It is important to avoid continual revisions, and the sections should be written with the idea that they should last for some time.



Length

4. That feature of the Digest which has come in for the most praise is that it contains authoritative basic, current and estimative intelligence on all important areas and problems -- in one handy volume. It is extremely important that each section be kept reasonably brief, otherwise it will be of little use to a busy user. Quite a



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Format

5. In general, each country section should be broken down into sub-sections with the following sub-heads: Political, Economic, Military, Estimate of Probable Developments, or Estimate of Capabilities. This is not an iron rule; for instance, some countries have no armed forces and a statement to this effect may be included under Political. Furthermore, the economy of some small countries may be dismissed in one sentence. Finally, an estimate is oftentimes not necessary. However, as a guide to the reader, sub-heads should be used if feasible.

Attribution

6. Because the Digest is a mixture of coordinated and non-coordinated intelligence, it is very important that a clear distinction be made between the two. In the Introduction we clearly state that where IAC material is used, we will indicate this in a footnote; we then go on to say that CIA assumes full responsibility for all other material. All contributors should therefore clearly indicate by appropriate footnoting those passages in their text which are either direct quotes, summaries, or revisions of IAC material. These footnotes will also serve the important purpose of indicating to readers the extent to which existing NIE's and SNIE's are still valid:

a. In the case of direct quotes, the footnote would read:
"This section contains the text of NIE...."

b. In the case of summaries, the footnote would read:
"This section is a summary of NIE...."

c. In the case of revisions, the footnote would read:
"This section is based (largely) on NIE...."

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